

## Tourists having trouble getting visa on arrival

**Says tour operators' group, urges govt to introduce e-visa**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Foreign tourists visiting Bangladesh are facing various problems and embarrassment while getting visa on arrival at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport, said Tour Operators Association of Bangladesh (TOAB) yesterday.

Leaders of TOAB said this while meeting the new executive committee of Aviation and Tourism Journalist's Association of Bangladesh (ATJFB) at TOAB's office in the

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

PRAYER TIMING NOVEMBER 21	
Fazr	Zohr
5:05	12:45
5:21	3:45
5:24	7:00
5:40	1:15
5:24	4:00
5:24	7:30
SOURCE: ISLAMIC FOUNDATION	



A seller shows off a blanket to a customer at Baitul Mukarram market. As winter knocks on the door, the capital's residents are preparing for the season by purchasing these blankets, which come in different colours, patterns and sizes. This photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED

## 'Bay of Bengal Conversation' starts today

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The first of its kind regional dialogue, "Bay of Bengal Conversation", will commence in the country today.

The conference focuses on finding pathways to integrate the regional countries to boost trade, connectivity and promote inclusive growth.

Centre for Governance Studies (CGS) will host the three-day dialogue at the Pan Pacific Sonargaon Hotel.

In a press conference held at a city hotel yesterday, CGS said the conference will have 200 speakers from 70 countries who will discuss the opportunities, potentials and partnership for a better society in the regional countries.

Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen will be the guest of honour at the conference, while Boris Tadić, the former president of Serbia, will present the keynote speech at the inaugural session.

Zillur Rahman, executive director of CGS, said he hopes Bangladesh can become a more prominent geopolitical player in South Asia through such initiatives.

"Through the exchange of ideas, we hope to improve both the standing of Bangladesh in the world, as well as the standing of South Asia in general," he added.

He said the flagship international conference aims to be Bangladesh's premier international conference, akin to India's Raisina Dialogue, the Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore, and Qatar's Doha Forum.

The conference will mainly focus on enhancing regional cooperation for greater security across the region, climate change displacement, and risk of conflicts in the Bay of Bengal region.

Subir Das, programme director of CGS; Apon Zahir, senior research associate; and Mahtab Uddin Chowdhury, research assistant of CGS, will be present among others.

### OBJECTIVES

Regional integration to boost trade

Promote inclusive growth and connectivity between countries

Discuss potential partnership opportunities

## Japan-Bangladesh venture to develop MRT-1 depot

Work to start next month

TUHIN SHUBHRA ADHIKARY

A Japan-Bangladesh joint venture firm will develop the depot area for the country's first-ever underground metro rail, MRT-1, for which physical work is expected to start next month.

Dhaka Mass Transit Company Ltd (DMTCL), the implementing agency of all metro rail projects, will sign a contract with the firm on Wednesday.

The companies are Tokyu Construction Co Ltd of Japan and Max Infrastructure Ltd of Bangladesh.

Tokyu Construction Co Ltd was also involved with the development depot for the country's first metro rail (MRT Line-6) in the capital's Diabari, while Max is involved with several projects of Bangladesh Railway and Roads and Highways Department.

The joint venture will do the "soil improvement and land development" work at the depot in Narayanganj's Pitalganj at a cost of Tk 697.65 crore within 910 days, sources said.

**Works of the Tk 52,561.43-crore project, formally known as Mass Rapid Transit Line-1 (MRT Line-1), the biggest infrastructure project in the transport sector, will start with land development for the depot.**

Of the money, Tk 81.83 crore will come from government funds, while Tk 525.83 crore will come from Japanese loan, they said.

Works of the Tk 52,561.43-crore project, formally known as Mass Rapid Transit Line-1 (MRT Line-1), the biggest infrastructure project in the transport sector, will start with land development for the depot.

**The joint venture will do the "soil improvement and land development" work at the depot in Narayanganj's Pitalganj at a cost of Tk 697.65 crore within 910 days.**

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is expected to join the ground-breaking ceremony of the underground metro rail next month, said project director Abul Kashem Bhuiyan.

"After the ceremony, depot development works will start," he told The Daily Star yesterday.

Once the 31.24-km line is completed, it will be able to carry 8 lakh passengers daily.

It will have two parts -- a 19.87-km section from Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport to Kamalapur (Airport route), which will be underground, and a 11.36-km elevated line from Notun Bazar to Purbachal (Purbachal route).

The airport route will have 12 stations, and the Purbachal route will have nine, seven of which

will be above the ground. Two stations on the Purbachal route -- Nadda and Notun Bazar -- will be built underground and used as an interchange, for passengers to switch between routes.

The MRT Line-1 will be the second of the six lines to be built in the capital and adjacent areas to ease traffic congestion and pollution. The government has taken a plan to build around 130 km of metro rail network -- with both elevated and underground sections -- by 2030.

MRT Line-6 is expected to be launched partially next month.

The feasibility study of MRT Line-1 was completed in December 2018. The Executive Committee of the National Economic Council approved the project in October 2019.

Of the Tk 52,561.43 crore, the government will provide Tk 13,111 crore and Japan Tk 39,450 crore as a soft loan.

The authorities had a plan to start the physical work of the project in December 2020. Later, they changed the starting date thrice mainly for the delay in drawing detailed design due to Covid-19 pandemic.

The authorities would implement the project under 13 packages -- one for consultants and 12 for civil work.

The board of directors on September 7 approved two proposals -- one for appointing consultants and another for appointing contractors for package

SEE PAGE 4 COL 1

## Provide workers with accurate info

**Speakers tell discussion on labour migration**

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Providing accurate information to workers is integral to ensure safe and orderly labour migration, speakers said at a discussion yesterday.

They said due to lack of information and false promises made by unscrupulous agents and intermediaries, migrant workers often face exploitation and become victims of trafficking at different stages of the migration journey.

Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit (RMMRU) and Winrock International organised the discussion as part of launching the app "SafeStep" (version 4.0) at a city hotel yesterday.

The event was attended by migration experts, government officials, members of parliamentarians' caucus on migration, alongside development and other stakeholders.

RMMRU and Winrock first released the app in 2020. The app is available on Google Play Store and has so far been downloaded by more than 10,000 people.

The latest version incorporates features like migration checklist, budget calculator, e-learning, and a help centre, which can be supportive for a migrant worker to

SEE PAGE 4 COL 6

### ISSUES

Exploitation by unscrupulous agents

Lack of work opportunities in Bangladesh

No integrated govt, private initiatives

## Reopen closed fertiliser factories

Suggests JS body

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A parliamentary watchdog yesterday recommended taking proper measures, including reopening closed fertiliser factories quickly, to increase production.

It also asked the authorities concerned not to import fertiliser.

The parliamentary standing committee on the planning ministry came up with the recommendations during its meeting at Jatiya Sangsad Bhaban.

According to sources, various projects of the Ministry of Industries were discussed in the meeting.

The committee was informed that the work of Shahjalal Fertiliser Project has been completed.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

## British High Commission starts using solar panels

DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

British High Commission in Dhaka has started using solar panels at its office, aiming to move to renewable energy and reduce carbon emissions.

In partnership with SOLshare, a climate tech company, the high commission has installed a 15.93 kilowatt per hour grid-tied rooftop solar system for its office.

"In other words, solar power will be offset against the High Commission's electricity consumption from the grid," the high commission said in a statement yesterday.

The solar panels will reduce carbon dioxide emissions by approximately 320 tonnes over their expected lifespan of 30 years, and will produce approximately 18,000 kilowatt hours of electricity every year, it said.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 4

## Art as a form of resistance

**Ruposhree Hajong expresses livid experiences and culture of Hajong community**

SHEIKH TAJUL ISLAM TAJ

A year ago, a woman from the Hajong community got married and started a new chapter of her life. After the wedding celebrations were over, she came to visit her parents.

Little did she know, within that time, she would go through one of the most dehumanising experiences of her life. While going to a nearby canal for a swim, she was raped.

Protests were held throughout the country at the time so that she would get justice, but with time, the cries for justice faded.

However, in recent time, Ruposhree Hajong, a student of the fine arts department of Jahangirnagar University, brought this harrowing tale back to life while highlighting the history, culture, heritage and crises of the Hajong tribe through a five-day photo exhibition titled "The Story of Hajong Tale".

In order to portray this woman's

struggle, she painted "Dokron", a Hajong word that means "roar" in English.

She used the traditional fishing instrument "jakha" to portray women who have been sexually abused. The black hands with claws represent the horrible men who have violated their autonomy.

The rope wrapped around their hands from the jakha represents the resistance of these women, who protest and stand up for justice.

"People use various means to express their emotions. Some sing, some organise protests, and others perform in some way. Since art is the form of expression, I feel the closest to, chose this language of protest," said Ruposhree.

"Making of a Dream" is another painting in which she portrays how the culture of weaving traditional clothing items has faded from the Hajong community at large. Many amongst the present generation aren't aware of the traditional methods of weaving.

SEE PAGE 4 COL 2



While football fever took over the country well before the world cup started, it can be clearly witnessed now. Alleys, main roads, and roofs have been decorated with flags of different countries to declare the fans' support for their favourite team. As a result, the city is full of colours. This photo was taken on Old Dhaka's Aga Sadek Road recently.

PHOTO: FIROZ AHMED